AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1, 14, 15, 47, 48, and 53 and amend claims 2-13, 16-24, 33-38, 49, and 54 as indicated in the following listing of pending claims.

1.   (Canceled)

2.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein displaying an assistance message includes displaying an assistance message at least proximate to and simultaneously with displaying the input.

3.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein receiving an input includes receiving an input that includes alphanumeric characters.

4.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54, further comprising activating the input if the characteristic of the input does not differ from the at least one target value, or differs from the at least one target value by less than the threshold amount.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54, further comprising presenting the input at an active display field if the characteristic of the input does not differ from the at least one target value, or if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value by less than the threshold amount.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54, further comprising activating the input if the characteristic of the input does not differ from the at least one target value, or if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value by less than the threshold amount, and wherein activating the input includes directing a change in a characteristic of the aircraft.

7.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54, further comprising activating the input if the characteristic of the input does not differ from the at least one target value, or if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value by less than the threshold amount, and wherein activating the input includes directing a change in at least one of a speed, altitude and flight path of the aircraft.

8.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a format of the input to a target format.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a number of characters in a character string to a target number of characters.

10.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a type of character in a character string to a target type of character.

11.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a numerical value to a target numerical value.

12.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein displaying a message includes displaying a plurality of sample complying inputs.

13.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54, further comprising displaying the same assistance message for all non-complying inputs provided to fulfill data requests of a predetermined type.

14.   (Canceled)

15.   (Canceled)

16.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein displaying an assistance message includes displaying multiple criteria associated with a complying input.

17.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein displaying an assistance message includes displaying an indication of a single criterion associated with a complying input when the input received at the aircraft flight deck fails to comply with the single criterion.

18.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein displaying the assistance message includes displaying at least one of a number of characters for a complying input, at least one alphabetic character for a complying input, and at least one numerical character for a complying input.

19.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein a complying input includes a data element and a modifier, and wherein displaying the assistance message includes indicating the position of the modifier relative to the data element for a complying input.

20.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54, further comprising:
receiving a request for a change in a characteristic of the assistance message; and
changing the characteristic of the assistance message.

21.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54, further comprising:

displaying the input at a first location of the aircraft flight deck; and

displaying the assistance message at a second location of the aircraft flight deck,
the second location being at least proximate to the first location.

22.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein the input includes
a first input, and wherein the method further comprises:

receiving a second input, the second input being a complying input; and

ceasing to display the assistance message after receiving the second input.

23.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~1~~54 wherein displaying the
assistance message includes displaying the assistance message at a multi-function
display of the aircraft flight deck.

24.   (Currently Amended) A method for handling aircraft operator inputs,
comprising:

receiving an input from an aircraft operator at an aircraft flight deck, the input
corresponding to a string of alphanumeric characters;

displaying the input;

comparing a characteristic of the input to at least one target value for the
characteristic;

if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value for the
characteristic by at least a threshold amount, displaying an assistance
message to the aircraft operator simultaneously with displaying the input
and at least proximate to the input, the assistance message including at
least one of a complying input and an instruction for creating a complying
input, wherein displaying the assistance message comprises:

determining whether the input differs from the target value on a first basis
or a second basis different from the first basis;

> > providing a first assistance message if the input differs from the target
> > value on the first basis; and
>
> > providing a second assistance message different than the first assistance
> > message if the input differs from the target value on the second
> > basis; and
>
> if the characteristic of the input does not differ from the at least one target value,
> or differs from the at least one target value by less than the threshold
> amount, activating the input.

25.   (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein activating the input includes presenting the input at an active display field.

26.   (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a format of the input to a target format.

27.   (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a number of characters in a character string to a target number of characters.

28.   (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a type of character in a character string to a target type of character.

29.   (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a numerical value to a target numerical value.

30.   (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein displaying a message includes displaying a plurality of sample complying inputs.

31.   (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the input includes a first input, and wherein the method further comprises:

receiving a second input, the second input being a complying input; and

ceasing to display the assistance message after receiving the second input.

32.   (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein displaying the assistance message includes displaying the assistance message at a multi-function display of the aircraft flight deck.

33.   (Currently Amended) A system for handling aircraft operator inputs, comprising:

a receiving portion configured to receive an input from an aircraft operator at an aircraft flight deck;

a comparing portion operatively coupled to the receiving portion to compare a characteristic of the input to at least one target value for the characteristic; and

a display portion operatively coupled to the comparing portion to direct a display of an assistance message to the aircraft operator if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value for the characteristic by at least a threshold amount, the assistance message including at least one of a complying input and an instruction for creating a complying input, wherein directing the display of the assistance message comprises:

determining whether the input differs from the at least one target value on a first basis or a second basis different from the first basis;

providing a first assistance message if the input differs from the at least one target value on the first basis; and

providing a second assistance message different than the first assistance message if the input differs from the at least one target value on the second basis.

34.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 32 33wherein the receiving portion, the comparing portion and the display portion include computer-readable media.

35.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 3233, further comprising a display device operatively coupled to the display portion to display the input and the assistance message.

36.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 3233, further comprising a multifunction display device operatively coupled to the display portion to display the input and the assistance message.

37.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 3233, further comprising an aircraft, the aircraft housing the receiving portion, the comparing portion and the display portion.

38.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium for handling aircraft operator inputs by performing a method, comprising:
        receiving an input from an aircraft operator at an aircraft flight deck;
        comparing a characteristic of the input to at least one target value for the characteristic;
        if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value for the characteristic by at least a threshold amount, displaying an assistance message to the aircraft operator, the assistance message including at least one of a complying input and an instruction for creating a complying input, wherein displaying the assistance message comprises:
                determining whether the input differs from the at least one target value on a first basis or a second basis different from the first basis;

> providing a first assistance message if the input differs from the at least
> one target value on the first basis; and
>
> providing a second assistance message different than the first assistance
> message if the input differs from the at least one target value on the
> second basis.

39.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein displaying an assistance message includes displaying an assistance message at least proximate to and simultaneously with displaying the input.

40.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein the method further comprises activating the input if the characteristic of the input does not differ from the at least one target value, or differs from the at least one target value by less than the threshold amount.

41.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein the method further comprises activating the input if the characteristic of the input does not differ from the at least one target value, or if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value by less than the threshold amount, and wherein activating the input includes presenting the input at an active display field.

42.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a format of the input to a target format.

43.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a number of characters in a character string to a target number of characters.

44.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a type of character in a character string to a target type of character.

45.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein comparing a characteristic includes comparing a numerical value to a target numerical value.

46.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein the method further comprises displaying the same assistance message for all non-complying inputs provided to fulfill data requests of a predetermined type.

47.   (Canceled)

48.   (Canceled)

49.   (Currently Amended) A system for handling aircraft operator inputs, comprising:

    receiving means for receiving an input from an aircraft operator at an aircraft flight deck;

    comparing means for comparing a characteristic of the input to at least one target value for the characteristic; and

    display means for directing a display of an assistance message to the aircraft operator if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value for the characteristic by at least a threshold amount, the assistance message including at least one of a complying input and an instruction for creating a complying input, wherein directing the display of the assistance message comprises:

        determining whether the input differs from the at least one target value on a first basis or a second basis different from the first basis;

providing a first assistance message if the input differs from the at least
one target value on the first basis; and

providing a second assistance message different than the first assistance
message if the input differs from the at least one target value on the
second basis.

50.   (Original) The system of claim 49 wherein the receiving means, the
comparing means and the display means include computer-readable media.

51.   (Original) The system of claim 49, wherein the display means includes a
display device for displaying the input and the assistance message.

52.   (Original) The system of claim 49, further comprising an aircraft housing
the receiving means, the comparing means and the display means.

53.   (Canceled)

54.   (Currently Amended) A method for handling aircraft operator inputs,
comprising:

receiving an input from an aircraft operator at an aircraft flight deck;

comparing a characteristic of the input to at least one target value for the
characteristic;

if the characteristic of the input differs from the at least one target value for the
characteristic by at least a threshold amount, displaying an assistance
message to the aircraft operator, the assistance message including at
least one of a complying input and an instruction for creating a complying
input, wherein displaying the assistance message comprises:

determining whether the input fails to comply with the target value on a
first basis or a second basis different from the first basis;

     providing a first assistance message if the input fails to comply with the
target ~~value for the~~ characteristic on ~~a~~ the first basis; and

providing a second assistance message different than the first assistance
message if the input fails to comply with the target value for the
characteristic on ~~a~~ the second basis ~~different than the first basis~~.